ONGC under Government Control

2234. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) enjoys the status of a Navratna company;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the privileges enjoyed by it being a Navratna company;

(c) whether in a letter dated November 7, 2005 his Ministry has asked the Department of Public Enterprises to review the ONGC's Navratna status and revert the company under full Government control; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The privileges enjoyed by Navratna companies are detailed in the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Enterprises on the 22nd July, 1997, as amended from time to time.

(c) and (d) ONGC have not concluded their MOU with the Government for the year 2005-06. As the Ministry are of the view that a signed draft submitted by ONGC is not entirely in accordance with the recommendations of the Task Force constituted by the DPE for this purpose, DPE have been apprised of the position and their advice sought on further action. There is no proposal to review ONGC's Navratna Status.

Waiver of Tax dues of Oil Refineries

2235. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to waiver-off tax dues from the oil refining majors like IOC, BPCL and others and also Reliance Industries; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, in order to facilitate the smooth transition from Administered Pricing Mechanism

(APM) to market determined pricing regime, the Government had notified "The Irrecoverable Taxes Compensation Scheme, 2002". The above scheme was valid only for the year 2002-03. A proposal to extend the validity of the scheme for the year 2003-04 is being examined by the Government.

Use of Kerosene for Commercial Purpose

2236. SHRI T.S. BAJWA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Kerosene oil is used in automobilies that cause shortage of kerosene oil for domestic uses;

(b) if so, the reasons therefore;

(c) whether any proposal is under the consideration of Government to reduce the use of Kerosene oil for the commercial purpose; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (b) Kerosene is sold as subsidized product through the PDS system. outside PDS allocations, there is free sale kerosene. PDS kerosene is allocated by the Government of India to the States/Union Territories for distribution.

Government are aware of attempts by unscrupulous persons to divert PDS kerosene for adulterating transportation fuels. Such attempts are largely driven by the substantial price difference between kerosene and transportation fuels.

(c) to (d) There is no proposal under the Government's consideration to reduce the use of Kerosene oil for the commercial purpose. However, Government takes punitive action against those indulging in diversion of PDS kerosene to unauthorized use for commercial purposes, including adulteration. Government/Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) take action under the following provisions:-

(i) In accordance with the Control Orders issued by the Government under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, to prevent fuel adulteration, State Governments are empowered to take action against those indulging in adulteration. Government have repeatedly urged State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to step up inspections/surprise checks to ensure